

## MUSKEGON AREA

*Your Business Advocate*

Testimony submitted by Janessa Smit, Vice President of Government Affairs  
Natural Resources, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Committee - HB 4160  
February 8, 2011

Good morning Mr. Chairman and committee members. My name is Janessa Smit. I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at the Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of the Muskegon Chamber's 1,100+ business members, I would like thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 4160.

The Muskegon Area Chamber of Commerce has been a long time supporter of the Pure Michigan campaign and has been proud of the quality, results and national accolades the campaign has received.

In our annual government affairs survey to the chamber membership conducted late last month, 78.8% of respondents felt that support for the Pure Michigan campaign was an important and high priority to the Muskegon business community.

According to the Department of Labor Energy and Economic Growth Bureau of Labor Statistics, the leisure and hospitality sector employs somewhere between 6,000 and 9,000 people (or approximately 10% of our labor force) in Muskegon County at certain times throughout the year.

In business, we talk about competitive advantage and differentiating your products and services in the market place. Michigan has a clear competitive advantage when it comes to tourism and natural resources. Locally we work hard to capitalize on these assets but I can not stress how important the Pure Michigan campaign has been at unifying our state under a single, impactful and positive message. Not only has it been effective at attracting new visitors and economic development to the state, I believe it has also helped renew Michigander's sense of pride and positive state image.

I had the opportunity to listen to Governor Snyder, State Treasurer Andy Dillon and State Budget Director John Nixon speak recently about Michigan's financial health. While there are certainly structural budget issues that need to be addressed, allocating limited taxpayer dollars where they provide a return on investment, create jobs and support economic development to the tune of a two to one return undoubtedly makes good business sense.

I understand this investment is a big decision given an additional \$10 million is a significant chunk of the \$75 million 21<sup>st</sup> Century Jobs Funds available and would not suggest this money be allocated without appropriate tracking mechanisms in place to provide transparency.

There are so many opportunities for growth and the re-invention of Michigan. Pure Michigan is an example of what's going right and I ask that you consider our support of HB 4160 when making your decision to increase Pure Michigan funding. Again, thank you for your time. I am happy to provide additional information or answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at [jsmit@muskegon.org](mailto:jsmit@muskegon.org) or 231-724-3183.